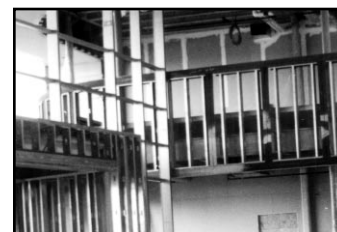


# Shrewsbury School Journal

serving a community of continuous learners



High School  
update on page 6

Winter 2002 • Vol IV

## Superintendent's Corner

BY DR. ANTHONY BENT  
SUPERINTENDENT

### FDR WAS RIGHT!

It was sixty years ago that President Roosevelt told the nation that we had nothing to fear but fear itself. At the time, Nazi Germany and Imperialist Japan, with millions of soldiers under arms and vast air forces and navies, posed a frightening threat to the peace and freedom of the entire world. As we all know, the American democracy rose up to defend itself (and the free world) as no one could ever have imagined. The rest, of course, is our proud history and heritage.

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nation that we had nothing to  
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It seems to this writer that America is rising up again. Our awakening to a new threat has focused our government, united our people, and made us all appreciate who we are and what we stand for! Doris Kearns Goodwin, a Pulitzer prize historian and presidential scholar, recently spoke at the annual meeting of Massachusetts school committees and superintendents and assured the audience that the danger to our country was much greater in the 1940's than in the aftermath of September 11, 2001.

In Shrewsbury's schools, we have increased our activity around issues of security and safety. Regular meetings of principals and central office administrators center on strengthening our ability to protect, as well as educate, five thousand students each day. Remarkably, our schools remain calm, productive, and focused on student learning. We also credit our superior teaching staff, wise administrators, and the respectful environments that have been established in each school. We are also credit parents who value public education and students who come to school each day ready to learn.

In some ways, very little has changed in our schools. While adults meet and implement procedures and practices that enhance school security, this work is done quietly and without notice. Our teachers and students remain focused on what they do best: teaching and learning. That is the way it was before September 11, 2001 and that is the way it is now. FDR was right.

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### Dupuis heads SPED

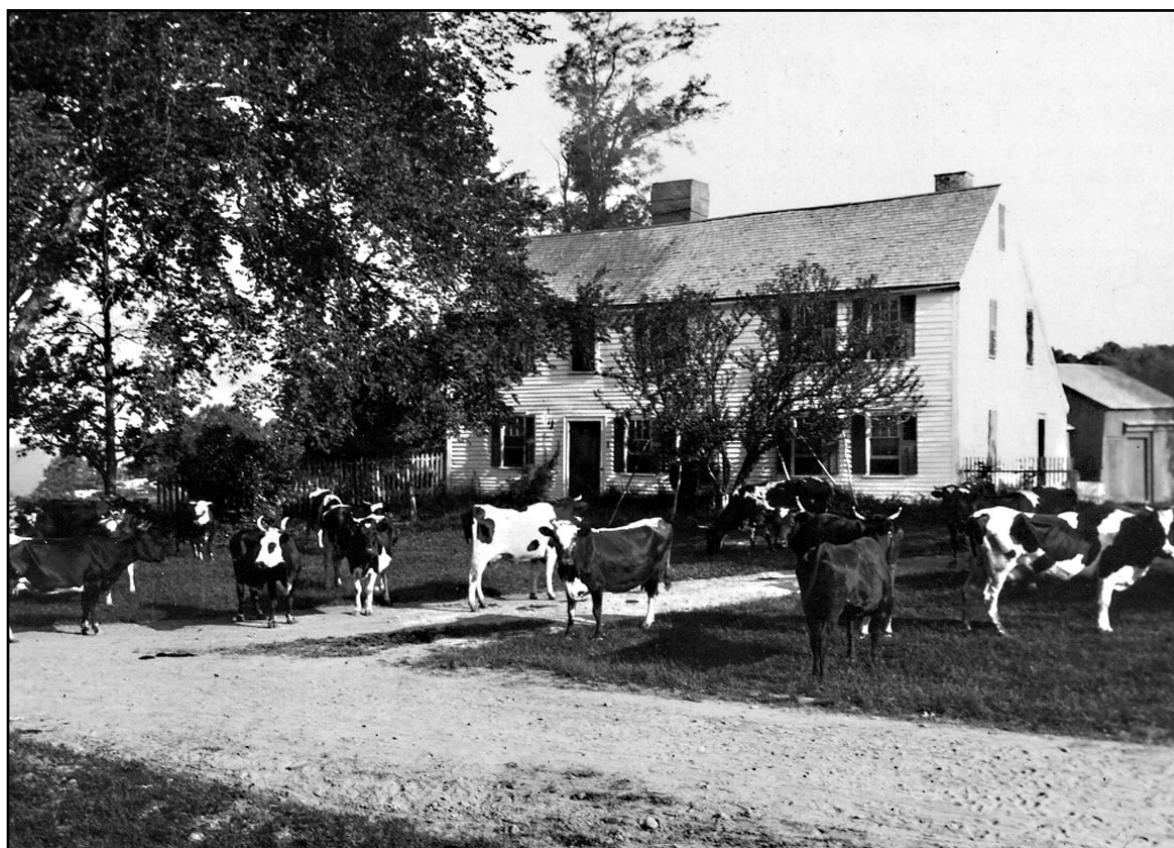
Interview by Dan Chaparian

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### 23 staff members recognized

Educational excellence continues

## Mooove over please



SHREWSBURY HISTORICAL SOCIETY PHOTO

*Cows placidly graze in the front yard of Dr. Flint's farm on West Main Street. The house was later moved back from the street and became known as 'Iristhorpe.' See page 5 for more information.*

## Parents are heard on Homework

ELLEN KELLY FAIRBANKS  
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

Homework! Too much? Too little? None on the weekend? What about special projects?

2,248 parent responses on homework have been returned to the district as a result of the recent survey! Members of the Homework Committee were extremely pleased with the high rate of return—76.4% for the elementary level and over 50% for the Middle School level. Many parents also used the opportunity to return written responses as well. The Homework Committee will use all of this data as it continues the work of preparing a report for the School Committee in preparation for new homework guidelines.

The study began with a teacher survey in the spring, followed by the parent survey in June. Every one of the 785 handwritten responses has been read and recorded as part of the study. Many parents wrote several pages, and thoughtfully, and at times passionately, articulated the strengths and weaknesses in the current homework program. The committee plans to use some of the parents' suggestions in its report.

The homework committee members presented the data gathered on the parent questionnaire to the Coordinating Council on October 24th. Copies of the survey results are available at the schools, on the district web site, and at the Public Library.

Assumption College Professor, and Coolidge School parent, Len Doerfler is assisting the committee in the statistical analysis of the results and will work with the committee as it continues to review the information gathered.

"There is still a great deal to be done" according to Principal Margery Clark, one of the Committee Co-Chairs. "We have one very important constituency that we have yet to survey and that is our students. What do they think about homework? We want to know."

After students have been polled, the Coordinating Council will review all the data and assist with determining recommendations. They have already identified salient points for the committee to focus upon as the committee continues its work.

"Defining the purposes of homework as well as clearly outlining parental responsibilities at each level are two key points," said Committee Co-chair, Joan Barry.

Studying homework is nothing new. According to the latest research, controversies over homework occur in 30-year cycles and the outcries range from complaints about too much homework to demands for more homework. The Shrewsbury Homework Committee hopes that when it presents its report, the Shrewsbury Schools will be able to establish new guidelines for homework so that it will be "just right" for Shrewsbury's students.

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